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FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.
ON TRYING PROVIDENCES.

(Concluded from page 18.)

I NOW offer a few remarks on the *manner* in which God tries his people. First, he does it thoroughly. He carries on the process till it has passed through every member and joint, every ligament and vessel of the spiritual system, and the believer has been brought to the test on every point. This much is intimated by the comparison—

“Thou didst prove and try us, O Lord,
As men do silver try.”

The whole work of sanctification, from its commencement in the day of regeneration, to its completion in the hour of death, is this “proving and trying.” There is not a single advantage gained over the “old man” without a trial. It is the *plucking out* of a right eye, and the *cutting off* of a right hand. It is *mortifying*; which signifies *putting to death*—one, not enfeebled, but in full vigour; which must needs be painful work, and trying to the graces of the Spirit. When one trial does not surve the purpose, another is sent, and another still, until the soul is brought completely to yield to the will of God.

More particularly, all their trials are about *truth and duty*. Will they believe because God declares it, and obey because *he* commands it, or will they not? all the affections of the flesh, and the concurring influence of Satan and the world, are exerted to the utmost to prevent them from coming to *this*, while all the arguments and persuasion in the scriptures, are used to bring them up to it. And when these do not succeed, God takes stronger measures; for to this point they *must* come ere they can have comfortable fellowship with him. Hence, there is constant war within them, and also without them. The flesh and the Spirit fight within, God and Satan without; and hence their trials arise. Every inch of their progress in faith and practice, is disputed, and must be gained by fighting, not only against the devil and the world, but themselves also; and ere

the battle is won, they have to pass through both the fire and the water.

Before they *can see* the truth as it ought to be seen, they must be put in the attitude of suffering and distress. To see that summary of all truth rightly—"Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom"—requires that one feel himself about sinking. To be prepared to see that gracious character—"a very present help in time of trouble"—we must *be* in trouble. "He is the widow's shield and the orphan's stay." This supposes trouble of the sorest kind. And besides these passages, which have an aspect towards some special case of distress, the godly know by experience that trouble and affliction is often an interpreter of the word to them with such clearness that they cannot mistake it.

I have already hinted, that the *receiving* of truth or embracing of it upon the testimony of God alone, is a sore trial. It is like poison to every carnal propensity. It says to pride, thou must be humbled to the dust, and the Lord alone must be exalted—to wisdom, thou must be accounted folly, and the wise man a fool—and to self-righteousness, thou must be cast off as filthy rags. The great man must humble himself to the level of a little child, and the rich and noble must account themselves poor, miserable, blind, naked, wretched and condemned criminals. This must needs be a hard lesson to learn. Many stop here, and proceed no farther. It is not till they are brought to the last extremity, and there is no other hope that *any* do fully receive it. And were not a divine power put forth in the word, and often accompanied with melting trials, their hearts would continue to resist it with all the hardness of the adamant.

Most of those that came to Christ in the days of his flesh, were impelled by some sore trouble, which nothing else could remove; and this is the case still. And not at our first receiving of the truth only, but in our future progress, sore trials are required to bring us to a hearty reception of it. Until these are sent, the same truth is read, and preached, and pressed on the mind, by the weightiest arguments, for years together in vain. This accounts for our progress being exceedingly slow, and our afterwards finding reason to wonder at our own stupidity, that could not receive at the first proposal, that which we have received only now after so *long* a time and so much trouble.

If the *receiving* of truth costs the believer many and sore trials, the *keeping* of it does so also. On this point, the trials of the visible church mainly turn, because it is of the highest importance. The whole interest of Christ's kingdom on earth turns here. While the church *holds fast*, his kingdom is on the advance, *and* when she relaxes her hold, the kingdom of Satan

has the advantage. Therefore, as it may be expected, so it happens, that both the church and the private christian, are oftenest and sorest tried on this. Having such a bearing on these two opposite kingdoms, Christ will be most jealous of his people's fidelity in this particular; hence his reiterated charge in the Revelation—"hold fast"—while the principal aim of Satan and those under him, will be, (as it has been,) to allure them or drive them *from this*.

Before specifying God's manner of trying his people on the *holding* of truth, observe, that to keep or hold fast the truth, is more than to retain a clear understanding of it, or continuing to assent to it. It is to hold it in public profession before the world, and as a rule of practice in the private walks of life. It is to hold it in the embraces of the heart, and give it a ready and cheerful obedience in things to which no authority, under God, can reach—an implicit confidence and trust which nothing but the testimony of him, who cannot lie, could warrant—and an esteem and delight answerable to its excellency and importance to the soul, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. To prove this, a great many scriptures, but especially a great part of the cxix. Psalm, might be adduced. Now, it is on these several ways of holding fast the truth, that God tries, and Satan tempts.

1. Suppose the case, which is often to be met with, that professors have difficulty in waiting upon the profession of the truth as espoused by them, perhaps from their distance from the place of worship or some circumstance in their situation; or, suppose they have difficulty in contributing their portion of support to it. This is ordered, in Providence, as their *trial*; to prove and try what *esteem* they have for their profession, what interest the truth has in their affections; whether it, or their own ease or worldly affairs, have the ascendancy. If the former, assuredly none but weighty reasons will prevent them from filling their place and doing their part; but if the latter, almost any thing will be deemed a sufficient excuse for delinquency.

2. Suppose public ordinances are taken from them, or they removed from them in some providential way, over which they had no control, this is a *farther trial* on the same point. If these ordinances, because of their purity and fulness, were esteemed as the wells of salvation and the bread from heaven, without which a soul cannot live, they will be considered a great loss, and the subject of much anxious concern, self-examination, and frequent prayer; and the longing desires of the soul after them will increase. But if they were counted but light food, such a privation will not be very painful, and

the irksomeness of silent Sabbaths will grow less as the mind finds out new employment for its thoughts.

3. Suppose there is some other profession in the immediate neighbourhood, which seems to come so very near their own, that they have to come down *only a single step* in their attainments, in order to have ordinances plenty and convenient. I call this a *trial*, appointed by the God of ordinances, and generally accompanied by many deep laid snares. For if they will consent to *come down at all*, if it were but an *hair's breadth*, the Devil can contrive to accommodate their conscience with as easy and indiscernible steps, all the way to the BOTTOM. Now is the time of trial on that text, "He that is faithful in the *least*, is faithful also in much." It is in *little things*, God puts the greatest trials on his people. In the *not eating* of the fruit of a tree, in *speaking* to the rock, instead of smiting it, &c. Now is the time to grasp that word—"Nevertheless *whereunto we have already attained*, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing;" and with it, it as with a sharp two-edged sword, lay open the plausible, but sophistical arguments, plead in behalf of yielding up this attainment, in which the difference lies. In such a case professors have great need to watch unto prayer, against delusion and false reasoning; but most of all, against their own carnal feelings. If they be divided against themselves, they cannot stand. This is the great trial of the present time, not to individuals only, but to churches also.

4. If, in the above case, professors stand their ground, a trial of a different nature generally falls to their lot. If the waters of error have not been able to drown them, it will be tried whether the fire of reproach can burn, or the tongue of persecution harass them. They are now vilified and reproached. They are called bigots, pharisaical zealots, hypocrites, uncharitable, illiberal, &c. This is ordered in providence, for their trial, on such texts as these, "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed," &c. "Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt." This trial is so much the greater, that the individual is left to stand in it alone. And as Samson said on another occasion, "if ye will not fall upon me yourselves," it would be some comfort; but, poor man, when the enemies of his profession, like so many Phillistines, are ready to fall upon him, his fellow-professors are frequently for giving up the cause, and basely standing aloof, or like Job's wife, they turn his integrity to his reproach.

In such a trial there is great need of patience, and also of meekness. Watch against the sallies of passion. Remember

that it is your trial, and that the Master of the house was still more severely tried on this same point. It is enough that the servant is like him. And take this for your encouragement, that Christ is on the side of the *jots* and *tittles* of his own truth, and will one day make it appear to the world.

5. The current of popular opinion is another trial, to those that would hold the truth. Both wind and tide are against them, and frequently raise such a tumult and commotion as terrifies the fearful and unbelieving out of their profession. It cannot be pleasant to be singular. And to stand out against all the world, would seem hard to reconcile with modesty. But the example of Christ comes in here to their assistance. Who so modest as he? "He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets." Yet who so bold in holding forth the truth? Sometimes in the days of this trial, it is wisdom to be content to *hold fast* that which we have, and to pray for grace to keep Peter's resolution—"though all men should forsake thee, yet will not I"—without drawing the sword for offensive purposes.

6. Though fire and sword are not now employed to exterminate heretics, yet we well know that the same truths are as hateful as ever they were, nor is it easy to determine to what a length malevolent feelings may carry men in mischief against the professors of them, under colour of law. When a multitude of all classes combine to carry a point, it is very easy to find a method of evading the best law, as the melancholy fate of MORGAN can witness. I say, therefore, it is *possible* that, amidst all the securities we enjoy, and under all the light that shines upon us, a man may not only be kept out of every office in the gift of his country, but he may be defrauded of his right, and plundered of his property, and, I would almost say, hardly escape with his life, on account of his firmness to the truth. But when it is the case, he is neither to *resent* nor *flee*, nor think it strange as though some strange thing happened unto *him*, which never happened to the witnesses of God before; but he is to look on it as one of his trials ordered by his heavenly Father, and study patiently to endure it for conscience sake, and take for his encouragement the declaration of the Saviour, made for this very purpose. "But if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of God, and of glory resteth upon you."

7. When some temporal interest comes in competition with the truth, or with the opportunity of professing it—some lucrative situation which will not allow time for family worship, or that calls us to live without the reach of ordinances, or that requires some attention from us on the holy Sabbath, or some marriage connexion, advantageous and agreeable every other

way, only there is a collision between it and the whole, or some part of the profession, it is a *trial* whether or not we will forsake father and mother, wife and children, houses and lands, for the sake of the truth. And though it is not so terrific and formidable as a stake or a gibbet, yet we have reason to fear that more have stumbled and fallen over it. It seems hard for a man to deny what he himself pleads for; and vast multitudes consider it impossible, and therefore yield, saying; they could not avoid it. Yet this is the very point on which the decision of their character turns. Without this they *cannot be Christ's disciples*. Here the child of God frequently fails, and has, in consequence, to suffer painful correction, and sometimes to go with a bowed down back to the grave.

8. I have said it is on the *keeping* of the truth the trials of the visible church mainly turn. Both her character, her duty and comfort, are identified with it. She is the pillar and ground of truth, and therefore with it must stand or fall. She is God's witness, and therefore if she either compromise or suppress truth, she becomes perjured, and her character is ruined. Truth is her foundation, her superstructure, her beauty and her very life; if therefore she lets truth go, she herself is quickly gone. And she is a city set on a hill—seen from all quarters, by which the enemy of truth can the more easily direct his shafts against her. Her great duty lies in "contending," "fighting," and striving together *for the truth*. Many a scheme have the gates of hell devised to decoy her from her position, or forcibly drive her from her duty; and often have they nearly succeeded.

How very near destruction she was brought by the fair daughters of men, the flood can bear witness. How far idolatry succeeded, we can see in the ruins of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar. In the days of Christ she was brought very low by the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and afterwards was she assailed by the most bloody persecution—then by a flood of damnable errors, and next by the *mystery of abominations of the earth* and the recoil of these—infidelity and atheism, until nothing was left of her but *two witnesses*. The next attempt was to sow the seed of discord within her own borders, thereby to set her at variance with herself. And by this unhallowed flame it is to be feared that some of her component parts have been withered and dried up. But now an armistice has been sounded, and *Peace* is now held out! Can it be? Impossible. The first promise proclaims war, to continue till the last enemy be destroyed, which is death, and victory proclaimed over the grave. It was spoken by him who cannot lie.

What are the terms of this proffered peace? Why simply

the transposition of the text, so as to read—"love the peace and the truth,"—instead of "love the truth and the peace." Zech. viii. 19.

Peace is truly desirable, and nothing can be more becoming the kingdom of the Prince of Peace; yet, in my humble judgment, this is as great and sore a trial as any God has ever put the church to since the beginning. This plan, the putting of peace before truth, pretends not to let go a single letter of the Bible; yet in fact it turns it upside down. Throughout the whole Bible, *truth* is the foundation and *peace* the superstructure; nor will God ever be at peace with men on another foundation. But this plan completely reverses that order. It is to this effect; let us first be at peace by all means, and then let us go as far as peace will allow us in behalf of the truth. The snare is deeply and ingeniously concealed, and many have fallen into it. Already the consequences to the truth are dismal; what the end may be, we know not. It is our comfort that he who reigns over all, is the God of truth, and the church will yet awake for both. Particular churches may fall off and perish, as they have done before; but in the worst of times, there will be a church to whom the whole of God's truth will be dear.

9. This leading trial of the day, gives rise to others of its own kindred. As a necessary consequence, the church is strongly urged to lay aside her warlike character altogether; to pull down her banners, and contend and strive and fight no more. She is told that these are antiquated customs, which took their origin from the emergencies of past times. She is flattered, she is threatened, and reproached by turns. This is her trial, and she would do well to take heed to it. It is at her peril to comply. They say, are not we the church of Christ as well as you? It may be hard to deny this, and it makes the trial so much the greater; but it can never prove that there is not a snare before us. There was upon a time a prophet sent from Judah to Bethel, to prophecy against the altar which Jeroboam had built there, and it was charged him by the word of the Lord, saying, eat no bread nor drink water, nor return again by the way that thou comest. And after he was gone, an old prophet went after him, and said unto him—"I am a prophet as well as thou art, and an angel spake to me by the word of the Lord, saying, bring him back with thee unto thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water;" but *he lied unto him*, as he afterward found to his sad experience.

10. This trial is laid upon the whole frame and constitution of the church, or wherever it seems to be an obstacle to this false peace. She is not expressly required to discard any of her peculiarities, but only to assign to them a different

place. She may retain her testimony, and every thing it contains, respecting doctrine, worship, discipline and government, only place them not at the *door of admission*, to guard its entrance. The ministry may draw out the sword of the Spirit as often as they please, and strike with it too, but for peace's sake not with the edge of it. She may sing what she pleases, and set up that government which she most approves, and administer discipline in her own way within her own border, but their opposites she must not condemn. This is her trial from God, and he that thinks he stands, ought to take heed lest he fall. So plausible is the appearance of the snare, gilded over as it is with scripture language, so specious are its arguments, and so imposing is the character of many who have gone into it, that unless a man stands in "*the full assurance of understanding*," he may be insensibly carried off. Attempts are not wanting to drive the honest professor from this ground also. It is boldly asserted, that we cannot be so assured of the truth of our profession, as charitably to pronounce what is opposed to it to be false; and the assertion is needed to bear out the consistency of setting *peace* before *truth*. That multitudes neither have nor seek after such understanding of their profession, is too obvious; but that there not only is "*all riches of the full assurance of understanding*," (Col. ii. 2.) within reach of the believer, but that it is his very safeguard in the present trial, is plain to be seen from the 4th ver. "and this I say, lest any man should *beguile you with enticing words*." If ever "*enticing words*" bid fair to draw off the church from *all fix-edness* in public religious profession, it is *now*. Let all, therefore, who regard her safety or their own, press forward to this "*full assurance of understanding*."

11. When men offer themselves as candidates to the holy ministry, who are opposed to any thing in the profession, indifferent about it or ignorant of it, this is a trial to the church's watchmen to prove how *they* stand affected to truth and their sacred trust, and whether personal considerations, talents, or any thing else, can with them preponderate over truth and their own solemn vows. Their decision in the case will *test* the state of matters, and what the church has to expect.

12. Suppose that after all their vigilance, men find an entrance into the ministry who are secretly opposed to some of the church's attainments, or suppose they should become so after their admission, but afterwards begin to divulge their opinions; this is a trial both to ministers and people, and it will prove whether they are watching over the interests of truth or not. If *peace* is becoming more attractive among them than *truth*, such men will be let alone for *peace's* sake; but if the

latter still retains its due priority, they will be subject to discipline.

13. When a candidate comes before a vacant congregation, who is esteemed an orator, but not too warmly affected towards the peculiarities of the profession, neither plain nor pointed in his applications, this is a trial to them. Here they have before them the "words which man's wisdom teacheth," and by that means a strong hope of increasing in numbers, and becoming great among congregations. By another, Christ crucified is preached with great plainness of speech. He is well calculated to satisfy the longing soul, but not to draw a multitude together. The flesh and the Spirit will have a hot contest before a decision can be made; for it is one of great importance, even the standing or falling of the truth. And here, even here, it often falls unheeded in the present time; and as a just punishment of their unfaithfulness, the congregation often dwindles, and at length becomes extinct.

14. When a congregation is very small, and not without great efforts able to support the preaching of the Gospel, it is to try them on that point of faithfulness, immediately concerned in the admission of persons into fellowship. For if they are more desirous of lightening their burden than of holding fast the truth, many will be admitted who ought not. And when this is the case, providence sometimes employs these very persons as a scourge to punish the officers who admitted them, that they may read their sin in their punishment.

15. When respectable and influential members become subject to discipline, or when the number of offenders is great and menacing, it is a trial to church officers; before which many fall. Unless the purity of the church, and the authority of Christ, in his discipline, have more weight on them than a time-serving policy, or the fear of man, they will fall into the snare.

When God himself, or his servants in his name, foretells an event to his people, whether it may be classed under the head of promise, prediction or threatening, it is a trial to their faith and hope; and though the end be the same, it is in circumstances different from the preceding. The truth of a doctrine is placed before us, and we may be said, in some sense, to see it as well as the testimony on which it rests; but here the truth is not seen, and nothing is seen but the testimony of God. There is no means of comparing it with another thing of the same kind, or of judging and reasoning concerning it. We are shut up in this case either to receive the simple testimony of God alone, or reject the whole matter altogether. This is therefore a different trial, but not an easier one. Should it begin immediately to be accomplished, as Samuel's

word to Saul, that he should be king, was, immediately after they parted, and as sundry other predictions are, or if they were always, as sometimes there has been a miraculous sign added, the trial would not be so great. But neither is the case. The first promise was made to the church 4000 years before the wonderful seed of the woman made his appearance; and the brusing of the serpent's head will not be completed till the last trumpet sounds, and the dead are raised. This is a standing trial to the faith and hope of the church, while she continues in her militant state. And how easy so ever we may think it is to believe it theoretically, yet when called to be in earnest with it in a dying hour, to venture upon it as our only hope of a glorious resurrection, it is not so easy a matter. Over this part of it, the Sadducees of old stumbled and fell, and denied the resurrection altogether. The length of time which has to elapse, is a main part of the trial, and unbelief cannot get over it. "Where is the promise of his coming? since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were." God promised to Abraham a numerous posterity, like the stars of heaven for multitude, and the land of Canaan for a possession. Nearly twenty-five years pass before a child of promise is born. In that same land of promise, he has to buy a piece of ground, in which to bury his dead, and die in it a stranger. These things were part of his trial, and his strong faith notwithstanding, he felt it at times. Even he was put to say—"Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus—Behold, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in my house is mine heir;" (Gen. xv. 23.) and at another time, he consents to the proposal of Sarah, and takes Hagar to wife, that he might have seed by her. This would say that the delay of a promise is no small trial, when people will adventure to put to their hand to bring about its accomplishment in their own way. He also promised to drive out the nations before Israel; but it was a long time before this was completed, which was a trial before which many fell, and learned their customs, practised their religion, and intermarried with them, as if they looked upon them to have a permanent footing in the land. In like manner has he promised the extirpation of in-dwelling corruption from every renewed soul, and that it shall be spotless. But it is long before this is accomplished, and experience can tell how often the child of God sickens at the delay, and letting the word slip from his mind, gives place to his lusts, as if they were to be permanent principles in the soul. Against one sinful affection, a besetting sin, he will fight and pray for many years together, yet cannot say he has gained any signal advantage over it. This occasions much discouragement,

and sometimes causes him in distress to cry—"O Lord, how long." The same remarks apply to all the promises on which the believer is brought to place his confidence and his hope for his own interest, or that of his family or the church. Has he been led by the Spirit to some word promising the light of God's countenance, or the teaching of the Spirit or his power, on the preaching of the word or any spiritual good, he is generally tried with a delay: and frequently he receives the accomplishment of it only in heaven.

But a simple delay is not the only thing by which he proves his people's faith in his word: His providence seems often to run in the face of it. This was the case, as to the first promise. Eve's first born is of the serpent's seed, and a murderer. The next thing we hear is, that the seed of the serpent has filled the earth with violence and corruption, and the woman is obliged to flee from the earth and take refuge in the Ark. After receiving a very full and particular promise, at Bethel, of divine keeping and a safe return to Canaan, Jacob is basely deceived and defrauded by Laban, and pursued with a band, as if he were a robber; and Esau is next meeting him, with 400 men, to cut him off. God communicates to Joseph, in two dreams, that he should be exalted to great honour; after which he is sold as a slave, and then cast into a dungeon and put in irons: how unlike the promise, this. This would try his faith in it. If he believed now, it must be only because he considered him who had promised, faithful and able also to do. It would have proved too much for Joseph; but God was with him. This made him cheerful in the dungeon, when others were sad, as it often has cheered the martyrs when suffering on a similar account. Moses is given to understand that God would deliver Israel by his hand; (Acts vii. 25.) but they put him away from them, saying, who made *thee* a ruler and a judge; and he is obliged to flee the country: a sore trial this, to one intent upon delivering his kindred out of it, and that upon a divine warrant. And he felt it to be so, as he intimates by his *Gershom*. From his marrying and settling in Midian, it would seem he had given up the thought, especially when to this is added his reluctance to go when God appeared to him at the back of Horeb, on purpose to send him. After David is anointed to be king, which was equal to a promise, he is despised by his brethren, hated and pursued by Saul, obliged to hide himself in caves and deserts, and at length flee his country as an outlaw. This would often put him to think of his anointing, and whether it was really from God. And when he said, "One day I shall fall by the hand of Saul," he must have been on the point of despondency. But God was with him through the trial, supporting his hope, strengthening his

faith, and defending him from his enemies, otherwise he would have fainted and perished. God often tries his people by demanding back from them the *begun fulfilment* of the promise. After Jacob returns to the land of promise, he has again to leave it and go down into Egypt. After Israel is delivered out of Egypt, they are threatened with inevitable destruction at the Red Sea. Abraham is commanded to deliver up the child of promise to the altar. Christ, the sum of all the promises, has no sooner come and manifested himself to be the truth of God's promise to the fathers, than he is apprehended and put to death.

This is one of the mysterious ways of providence with his church in all ages. No sooner has the light of the gospel gone forth in the strength of the promise to bless all the families of the earth, than the fire and sword threaten to extinguish it with the blood of martyrs. And at its breaking forth again at the Reformation, a similar attempt was made. No sooner does a church or an individual congregation receive some promising indication of prosperity and comfort, than, like the sun in his morning brightness, it is suddenly covered with a cloud. The saint obtains, at last, that realizing and satisfying sense of the power of religion, which has been the subject of many prayers and long waiting, perhaps in some sermon or communion Sabbath: but lo, in a moment, it is lost, and some violent assault from sin and Satan succeeds it. Paul is caught up to heaven, and immediately after is buffeted by Satan. And happy would it be for those who are tried after this manner, if, instead of giving way to unavailing regret or gloomy apprehensions, they would follow his example, and cry unto God until they receive an answer. This is no common or ordinary trial. It calls upon the people of God to put forth the whole of their strength. It made Joshua to cry out—"O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Would to God we had been content to dwell on the other side of Jordan." Joshua, vii. 7. And this was but a few weeks after he had said—"Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you; and he will *without fail* drive out from before you the Canaanites," &c. iii. 10. Nothing less than Abraham's faith, when going with Isaac to Mount Moriah, will enable one to stand in such a time, viz. "Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." And it is generally rendered more severe by a trial of a different sort; going along with it, viz. the success and prosperity of the wicked. This of itself is a trial; that the holy and righteous God should give to the ungodly and the proud more than their hearts could wish—no bands in their death—not troubled or plagued them as other men, while

the promise holds forth their overthrow and destruction; and that he should measure out chastisement and great plagues daily to his own people, whom he has promised to pity as a father, and keep as the apple of his eye—that they should possess the fatness of the earth, and his people, who are the salt of it, should suffer “hunger and thirst and fasting, and cold and nakedness”—that they should dwell in the splendour of a palace, and the saints in a dungeon or on a dung hill. This is to them a sore trial, and often times their steps near slip, their feet are almost gone; and it is impossible they can stand, unless, with the psalmist, they go to the sanctuary for an explanation of these things. God’s own people are extremely apt here to fall into the same error into which wicked men fall, who measure religion by the professors of it, which ought just to be reversed; they judge of his word, and promise by his providence. This plunges them into deep distress, and fills them with direful apprehensions, as if judgment had forsaken righteousness; whereas, would they reverse this order, they would calmly conclude, that though judgment has for the present gone out of their sight, it will infallibly return to righteousness, and terminate in the accomplishment of the promise.

Every one’s trials are not alike, but there is one exception. Death, the last one, comes to all. I will not say that it is always the severest, but because we know of it so long before, and none who have passed through it, return to tell us their experience, we are ready to think so. And were there nothing more in it than these two things, it cannot be regarded as a slight trial. The strength of the *man in Christ* is not too much here. Sin and Satan now make their last effort, and the saint, like David to Goliath, has to go down into the valley and meet them *alone*. It is doubtless encouraging at such a moment, to have to reflect that we have fought with the Lion and the Bear, and been delivered, but it will not be enough. This is a new and untried foe; his aspect is terrible, and his weapons destructive. Nothing, nothing but the absolutely free promise of pardon and acceptance through the atoning blood of Jesus *alone*, will do here. If the believer wishes to be able to keep his head above water, when he enters the swellings of Jordan, let him daily bind on to him this precious promise, as the girdle of his loins: This alone will keep him from sinking, yet it is obvious that the more weights he now lays aside, the more buoyant he will then be.

While this subject cannot itself be exhausted, it soon exhausts the scanty measure of knowledge of any that would attempt to speak or write upon it. And for the present I must conclude with an inference or two.

1. Whatever be the aspect of God's providence, his love continues unabated, and his purpose unaltered towards his people. He makes long delays, opposing dispensations, the wrath of man, the triumphs of the wicked, and all other things work together for their good. This should in every case induce them to take courage, and look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at God himself.

2. When the Spirit of God brings a promise with power upon the mind, with convincing clearness as to its right application; the effect of which is to draw the heart and affections towards God in acts of faith, hope, and obedience; we ought to expect to be tried upon it in some way or other, perhaps in some of the ways above specified. And to be in expectation of it, is to be half prepared to meet it.

3. We ought in no possible condition of things to admit the thought of parting with such a promise. The trial we *must* undergo; but let it be what it may, every promise given as above, contains in it suitable and sufficient provision for supporting us through it. And though the same may be said of every promise, yet this one will have a more direct reference to the trial annexed to it. For example, Abraham's trials in expecting hard, and apparently impossible things to take place; but seeing his promise was endorsed, "I am God Almighty," could any thing be too hard for him? Jacob's trials were connected with the dangers and difficulties of journeying, and his promise was—"And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."

Moses' trials lay in delivering God's messages to wicked and rebellious men, and his promise was—"I will be thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

If, therefore, the believer will hold by the promise, it will hold him as the anchor which cannot be seen, will hold the vessel sure and steadfast, amidst the storm, from what quarter soever it may blow. If the earth should reel and stagger, like a drunken man, and the wisest on it be brought to their wit's end, the promise will hold up the believer and bring him safe to land.

4. As God tries his people oftenest and sorest on the receiving and holding of truth, it would be wise to use our utmost endeavours, first to come to a full and satisfactory understanding and reception of it, upon his own testimony; and second, to have an habitual impression of its infinite importance; and third, of our high responsibility, upon receiving it, to hold it fast. This will contribute much to support the mind under trials on its account.

5. When trials are producing a good effect upon the soul, it will be often pouring out itself in prayer. When this is not

the case, we may be assured that we have mistaken views of providence, and are pursuing a wrong course, and that if we save ourselves from the smart of this, something more severe is coming.

That these remarks may help the afflicted in his trial, is the prayer of **EGO.**

FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

ON THE CONTROVERSY RESPECTING THE COMMON BENEFITS OF LIFE.

(Concluded from page 23.)

IN matters of religious controversy, truth ought to be the main object of pursuit, and love to God and his truth the ruling principle. Not to be at due pains to understand each others real views; and certainly much more to misrepresent or partially and defectively to state those of an opponent, for the sake of obtaining a more easy victory or securing a larger share of public favour, is, to say the least, neither to show due respect to truth, nor to act a christian part towards professing Christians. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour, is a precept we fear often transgressed in religious, as well as in other controversies. If a church does not express her sentiments on any point with sufficient clearness, she has no just reason to complain of being misunderstood and misrepresented; but if she has done this, those who do it are without excuse. In Ref. Principles Exhibited, page 115, of the historical view, among other misrepresentations of her principles, the Associate Church is said to hold, that "The Redeemer has not purchased temporal benefits for the saints," and in page 32 of the Testimony, the sentiment expressed in these words is expressly condemned. Now, though in the passage referred to, these words are accompanied with the usual marks of quotation, leading the reader to consider them as a quotation from the standards of the Associate Church, yet no such language is to be found in any of these, either in Britain or America. And it is very far from expressing fairly or fully her sentiments on this topic, as she herself has given them. For if by the expression, "temporal benefits," we are to understand the benefits enjoyed by the believer in this life, a sense in which, without explanation, it is natural to understand it, then it would be directly contradictory to the received doctrine of the Associate Church; for with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, she believes that "They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life

do either accompany or flow from them." If the expression, "temporal benefits," is to be understood of the things that *belong* to this present life, to say that the Associate Church maintains, and has embodied in her standards, the doctrine that the "Redeemer has not purchased these for believers," is a statement unsupported by truth, and at the same time uncandid and fallacious. For, on the contrary, she believes and declares, that so far as the believer's use and enjoyment of the things that pertain to this life is *special* and *peculiar* to a believer, that is, in so far as he differs in his enjoyment of them from the unbeliever, or in so far as they are made subservient to his salvation, so far are they to be viewed, as purchased by Christ, and proceed from him as Mediator. But, considering the things pertaining to the present life, so far as they are *common* to the believer and the unbeliever, abstracting from the consideration of them, either as under a curse or a blessing, but simply considered as conducing, according to the appointment of God, as the God of providence, to the support and comfort of man, *considered as a creature, in this sense only*, does the Associate Church deny that they are the purchase of Christ; for in this sense only are they *common* to all. Her language is, (Art. IX. Sec. 5, of the Testimony,) "We reject the opinion of those who teach that Christ, did by his death purchase the benefits of this life, WHICH ARE COMMON TO ALL MEN." Now, that the scriptures recognise this distinction, or that God deals with men according to the different relations in which they stand to him as creatures, as sinners, or as saints, every candid reader of the scriptures, we think, must allow.

As creatures God, as the God of nature, or as the Creator and preserver of the ends of the earth, is their father, the former of their bodies, and the father of their spirits. It is surely viewed in this relation, and not either as sinners or saints, that the Apostle says, Acts xvii. 25—28.—"God giveth to all life and breath and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are all his offspring." In a similar manner does the Apostle testify concerning God, chap. xiv. 15—17. "The living God—made Heaven and earth and the sea, and all things that are therein, who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain

from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." See also to the same purpose, Ps. lxxv. 9. 13. Matth. v. 45. 1. Tim. iv. 10. In all these and many other similar passages, God is spoken of as the God of providence, regarding men simply as creatures, and out of his bounty supporting, providing for and manifesting his goodness to them. But though he sustains this relation to man, and acts accordingly, it is not the only relation in which he stands to him—he sustains also that of his lawgiver and judge; and man, having violated the divine law—thus considered—God is angry with him every day, and the curse of the violated law, rests upon him, he is cursed in his basket and in his store. Thus then along with the manifestations of his bounty towards man, (considered as a creature,) in furnishing the means and comforts of natural life for a time, he also gives the certain manifestations of his displeasure, as a sin avenging God. While as the God of providence he fills the basket and replenishes the store even of the wicked, he, as the God of justice, lays his curse on both.

But when, in the day of effectual calling, the sinner is by believing united to Christ, and justified and accepted in the sight of God, he is no longer under the curse. All that judicial displeasure with which God formerly regarded him, is removed, and he is now the subject of innumerable and precious blessings. Gal. iii. 13, 14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." It is obvious, then, that though the man's relation to God, as a *creature*, continues the same, and of course he receives the supplies of his basket and store from the hand of God, as the God of providence, as he did before he was effectually called, and as unbelievers still do in common with him; yet his relation to God as a sinner, is now changed. Being now a saint, justified and accepted of God, the curse is removed from his share of the good things of Divine Providence, and in its room comes the blessing of God, which renders them subservient to the real temporal good as well as to the scriptural and eternal good of the believer. The amount of the whole is, that while the supports and comforts of natural life, which come from the hand of God as the God of providence, to men, as his *creatures*, are common to believers and unbelievers, and are not the purchase of Christ to either; yet all that wide difference that there is in the possession of these by the unbeliever, as under the curse, and by the believer as free from the curse, and attended by the richest blessings, is the fruit of the purchase of Christ. All this is briefly, explicitly and correctly stated in the appendix to the Act of the Associate Sy-

nod of Scotland, concerning Arminian errors, under the head of "Christ's Mediatory Kingdom and Common Benefits," vol. 2. page 301, of the Display of the Secession Testimony. "There can," says the author of the Display, "be no proper enjoyments of any benefits from Christ, as benefits of his mediatory kingdom,—but in a way of communion and fellowship with him, by faith. Thus, no common material benefits, as enjoyed by wicked men or unbelievers, can be looked upon as benefits of his mediatory kingdom, or as the fruits of his purchase. These material benefits, *in the most general consideration thereof*, do proceed from God as the Creator and preserver of the world; in which respect they are common to men and beasts. But, more particularly they always come to men in some covenant channel. They come to wicked men, or unbelievers, through the broken covenant, in the channel of its curse. And so, whatever material goodness be in these things, to them as suited to their fleshly nature, like the goodness thereof unto beasts; yet there is no spiritual goodness attending the same,—no divine love, but wrath. Whereas, on the other hand,—these benefits come to believers through the covenant of grace, in the channel of its blessing: and so they enjoy these benefits in a way of communion with Christ; as benefits of his mediatory kingdom." Or as elsewhere, while the things pertaining to this life, "*in the most general consideration thereof, or 'as common to all men,'*" do proceed from God, as the Great Creator and Preserver of the world," and "do not belong to Christ's mediatory kingdom, upon a right of donation and purchase; (for such a donation and purchase was neither needful nor competent to him, who is *over all, God blessed forever*)—but the gracious and supernatural ordering of things unto gracious and supernatural ends,—in a channel of love and favour to his people, and with a subserviency to the purposes and glory of free grace in their salvation,—*all such ordering of these things*,—or these things considered under the formality and in the channel of such *gracious orderings*, do belong to his mediatory kingdom," and are to be considered as the benefits of his purchase. The reason plainly is, that though *as common to all*, they could have been, and are enjoyed by wicked and reprobate men; yet in the gracious and supernatural ordering of them in subserviency to salvation, or as coming "through the covenant of grace in the channel of its blessing, and to be enjoyed with the divine favour, they never could have been bestowed in consistency with divine justice, without an atonement." See Gib's Display of the Secession Testimony, as above.*

* Those who have not access to Gib's Display, will find the passages here referred to, extracted from it in Dr. Anderson's *Alexander and Rufus*, p. 433, 434 and 435, under the title of "Christ's Mediatory Kingdom."

Corresponding to, and in unison with these views, is the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, respecting Christ's mediatory kingdom and purchase. To confine ourselves for the present to the Shorter Catechism, in answer to the question, how are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? It is answered, it is "by the effectual application of it to us by the Holy Spirit," and farther, "that the Spirit does this, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling." Now, we may ask, are the things pertaining to the present life, as *common to all men*, or as proceeding from God as the Creator and preserver of the world, received in this way? They are not: and, therefore, according to the Westminster divines, do not belong to the "redemption purchased by Christ." Farther: In answer to the question, what benefits do they that they are effectually called partake of in this life? they say, (and here if any where their views ought to appear,) "They are made partakers of justification, adoption and sanctification, with the several benefits, which in this life, do accompany or flow from them." And these again are said to be, "Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and perseverance therein to the end." The things of this life, as *common to all men*, are not among them, and, therefore, these divines being judges, they are not among the blessings enjoyed by men, as effectually called, in this life. In the sum of saving knowledge, head IV. entitled, "The blessings which are effectually conveyed by these means, (viz. the outward means appointed to make the elect partakers of this covenant) to the Lord's elect," there is no mention of the *benefits common to all men*, nor of any general head under which they can be classed; which justifies the same conclusion. In the fourth petition, contained in the Lord's prayer, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," the same authority says, "we pray that of God's *free gift* we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and *enjoy his blessing* with them." For the interpretation of this part of the Shorter Catechism, we refer to the corresponding question in the Larger Catechism, and to the excellent explanation of the Shorter Catechism, by Fisher and Erskine. Under this question it is asked, Quest. 17, "Since both the godly and the wicked have their daily provision from God, what difference is there as to the manner in which the one and the other hold their outward comforts?" It is answered, "there is a *wide difference*, whether we consider their respective right and title, their present enjoyment, or their future expectation." In point of right and title, "the wicked have only a civil and *common right*, but the godly have,

besides this, a spiritual and covenant right. 1. Tim. iv. 8. The godly have God's blessing on what they enjoy, but the wicked his curse. The godly have the good things of this world as pledges of the far better things of another : but the wicked have them as their whole pay, for they have their portion in this life. Ps. xvii. 14." With respect to the expression, spiritual and covenant right, here used by the compilers of the Catechism, as well as by Boston, on this subject, it is proper to observe, that it is used by but few writers, (those belonging to the Reformed Synod being excepted,) and by these without any farther explanation of what they mean by it, than is contained in the above quotation. It is certain, however, from the above quotation, that, in the opinion of the compilers, both righteous and wicked men have a "*common right*," to the good things of this life ; that is, they are granted freely to both by God, as the God of providence, or as it is called by Boston, a *providential right*.

This is the amount of all that has ever been maintained by the Associate Church, in relation to this subject. Let this be granted, and nothing that can be consistently intended by the phrase, "*covenant right*," can be opposed to her views respecting common benefits. For if God, in the dispensation of his providence, as we have seen, and as is here stated, bestows the things of this life upon the unbeliever, without the purchase of Christ, they may be and are bestowed upon the believer in the same way—that is, "*as common to all men*, they are not purchased," but the free "*gift of God*," in the dispensation of his providence, in whom all live and move and have their being. Consistently with this, nothing farther can be intended by "*a spiritual and covenant right*" than what is included in what is above stated, that these common benefits come to the believer, not only from God, as "*creator and preserver of the world*," but also that they come to him "*through the covenant of grace in the channel of its blessing*," freed from its curse, and are under the gracious orderings of Christ as mediator, whereby they are rendered subservient to his spiritual and eternal good, or by which they are made to work together for good to the people of God. In this view of them, and this only, do they belong to Christ's mediatory kingdom, and are the fruit of his purchase, and are included in that interesting exhibition of divine mercy to the believer, 1. Cor. iii. 22, "*All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours :*" Not that they are *purchased for them*, considered in themselves, and as under the ordering of common providence and "*common to all men* ;" for surely in this sense, "*DEATH*" would never be considered a purchased blessing. But they are theirs in

a *special sense*, as under the gracious and supernatural orderings of Divine Providence, by Christ the mediator, made subservient to their salvation. And in this view, **DEATH**, as much as any other thing, is really a purchased blessing. Such, we believe, is, and always has been, the doctrine published by the Associate Church, on this subject. Your readers will now be able to estimate the candor and truth with which it is said, "She denies that the Redeemer purchased temporal benefits for the saints." The addition of the few words, "*as they are common to all men*," which is the language of the Associate Church herself, would have made the representation correct. Why they were **NOT** added, we enquire not : only this we must say, that as they are indispensable to a correct statement of her views, in common truth and honesty another church, in professing to give these views, was bound not to exclude them.

But it is said, temporal benefits are promised to believers, and they are required to pray for them, therefore they must be purchased. This forms the common argument for the purchase of common benefits ; but it is one altogether inconclusive, for it takes for granted, that every thing that is promised, or for which we are authorised to pray, is purchased by Christ, which cannot be granted. The love of God and the Holy Spirit are both promised to believers, and for both we are authorized to pray. But it will not be pretended that these blessings are purchased; or if it should be pretended, its absurdity can easily be demonstrated. As was shown in some excellent papers on the subject of Christ's Purchase, in the 2d volume of the Religious Monitor, many things belong to Christ as mediator, and to his mediatory kingdom, and are the subject of promise, and the object of prayer, which cannot with propriety be said to be purchased : as, for example, the incarnation and offices of Christ, and his exercising of these. Not even the outward dispensation of the gospel, but only the gracious effects of this in the salvation of sinners, can properly belong to this purchase. This argument, therefore, is wholly inconclusive, and as may be said respecting other things, so respecting this: Not temporal benefits themselves, as common to all men, but as rendered subservient, by the gracious orderings of a special providence to the salvation of the soul, are the purchase of Christ.

But inconclusive as this argument is, in this way, we observe farther, that even if it were conclusive, it would not affect the doctrine of the Associate Church, respecting common benefits, as stated in her standards, however destructive it would be of it as it is represented in the standards of the Reformed Church. For even though temporal benefits are promised

to believers, as I freely admit, yet they never are promised to them in any other way than as *special* blessings, not common to all men. Since God, in his providence, provides for them the things of this life, so that as Boston and Erskine say, they have a providential or common right to them, the promise simply intimates to the believer, that God will give him *these same benefits* through the channel of the covenant of grace, freed from the curse, and ordered in such a way, as to the measure and way and manner of their enjoyment, as by the divine blessing will be productive of good to them, and promote the glory of God in their salvation. This gives them reason to hope and believe that they shall be communicated in this way, and authorizes them to pray for the accomplishment of the promise. Coming according to the tenor of the promise then, they are no longer to be considered merely as benefits common to all men, in which sense only has the Associate Church denied that they are the purchase of Christ.

That any, belonging to the Associate Reformed Church, should suppose that the doctrine of the Associate Church is erroneous, we can account for in no other way than by supposing, that from the misrepresentations of her sentiments on this head, they have not clearly ascertained what these sentiments are; or, that a confusion of ideas on the subject generally, has been the effect of the attempt made in one of the articles, in the original constitution of the church, to state this doctrine in such a way as to be acceptable to both the uniting parties, who were far from being united in their views respecting it. We do not see how it is possible, consistently, to hold the views of providence, and the mediatory kingdom of Christ, which the Associate Reformed Church has always held, and yet affirm that the things of this life, *as common to all men*, and coming from God, as the God of providence, are the purchase of Christ.

Having endeavoured to state, as explicitly as I can, the views of the Associate Church, on the subject of the common benefits of life, as this paper is perhaps too long already, instead of detailing the oft-repeated arguments in support of these views, as I at first intended, I shall merely refer to them; and indeed any thing farther than this, seems to be wholly unnecessary; for the truth, when fairly stated, seems so simple, and so obviously according to the scripture, that any parade of argument or length of illustration, would seem more to obscure than illustrate and establish it. That, however, your readers may know where to find them, I refer them with much satisfaction to the excellent papers in the Religious Monitor, on the Purchase of Christ, volume 2d, pages 188, 224 and 275, Alexander and Rufus, page 433, and Gib's Dislay, there referred to,

and to a late work, on the subject of common benefits, by the Rev. John Donaldson. This last is the only work with which I am acquainted, written professedly on this subject; and though some of his arguments may not be deemed conclusive, and some of his statements not entirely correct, yet, on the whole, is a good little work on the subject: very far indeed from deserving the scurrilous, illiberal, and uncandid attack made upon it by a reviewer in the *Evangelical Witness*, who regards himself with as much complacency as he treats Mr. D. with contempt and ridiculous abuse; and yet notwithstanding, plainly shows, that he neither understands the sentiments of those whom he defends, nor of those whom he opposes.

The argument in support of the doctrine of the Associate Church, as laid down in her testimony on this subject, is short and simple; and I conclude this paper by doing little more than stating it in the words of the Display of the Secession Testimony. I have already shown that God, in the dispensation of his providence, views man as standing to him in the relation of a creature, and that in God he lives and moves and has his being; and that this care of God about men as creatures, extends to them, whether believers or unbelievers. It is admitted by those opposed to us here, that God, in the case of the former, consistently with his justice, grants them the bounties of providence for their use, as creatures, for a time, without any purchase; and if the justice of God admits this, with respect to any one who is a sinner, it does so equally to all; and of consequence, there was no NEED for the purchase of Christ extending to the things of this life *as common to all men*; and if it was not necessary, we may rest assured it was not done. God will do nothing in vain; Christ would not shed his blood for that which could be obtained without it.

"No things," says the author of the Display, "can be properly reckoned the purchase of Christ, or the proper fruits of his death; but such things as the vindictive justice of God could not immediately admit of, without a satisfaction. All venting of the love of God upon guilty sinners, by receiving them into a state of pardon and favour,—or all that immediately pertains to their salvation; with the glory of Christ and free grace thereby: All this belongs to the purchase of Christ, and the proper fruits of his death; being what vindictive justice could not immediately admit of, without a satisfaction.

"But vindictive justice could require or admit of no satisfaction,—in order to a preserving the natural world in its natural course, after the fall: Seeing that very justice, in the curse of the broken covenant, necessarily required that preservation of the world,—for the production of the seed, who had sinned and fallen in the first covenant-head. And vindictive

justice can require or admit of no satisfaction,—in order to the conferring of outward material benefits upon wicked men, or of any outward benefits enjoyed by them: Seeing their enjoyment of these benefits doth not withdraw them from vindictive justice, but leaves them under wrath,—and is actually cursed unto them through a channel of wrath, ripening them for destruction; so that vindictive justice leaves full room, in this case, for the exercise of divine wisdom, sovereignty and long-suffering,—without requiring or admitting of any satisfaction, in order thereunto. In a word, all doctrine about the shedding of Christ's blood, for any of these things in order whereunto vindictive justice did not and could not require or admit of a satisfaction,—is at best but a doctrine about the vanity of his blood-shedding, and injurious to the glory of that mystery."

Selections.

A SERMON,

Preached at Montpelier, before the Legislature of the state of Vermont, on the day of the Anniversary Election, October 11, 1827, by the Rev. Thomas Goodwillie, pastor of the Associate Presbyterian Church of Barnet, Vt. Published by order of the Legislature.

PROV. xiv. 34. Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

THE Sovereign of the universe uses two principal means in governing mankind. The one is his spiritual law, which exercises its authority over the conscience, and takes cognizance of the thoughts, desires and intents of the heart, and many of those actions which cannot be controlled by human laws. Its sanctions relate chiefly to the retributions of the eternal world. The other is civil government and human laws, which exercise their authority over those external acts of mankind, which relate to the welfare of society. Its sanctions are entirely of a temporal kind. Both reason and revelation concur in declaring that civil government is an ordinance of God, instituted for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise and protection of them who do well. The Apostle Paul says, 'There is no power but of God, the powers that be, are ordained of God.' Jehovah is the absolute Monarch, who 'has prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.' He is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, from whom all power and authority, of every kind and degree, are derived. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, by whom all power is delegated, and to whom all who are in authority are amenable. The authorities established in any country are as really appoint-

ed by him, as were the judges and kings of ancient Israel; for he can accomplish his purposes by instruments or second causes as well as by immediate interposition. He has an absolute and essential right to appoint his own representatives or vicegerents. The introduction of sin into the world, has rendered civil government necessary to preserve the lives and liberties of mankind. The holy scriptures do not prescribe any particular kind of government as of divine right and universal obligation. The different forms of government arise from the circumstances of mankind; and they vary as these circumstances vary in different ages and countries. Divine Providence directs who shall govern, and what shall be the form of government in every age and nation. Whatever, therefore, be the form of government, whether monarchical, aristocratical or republican, it is the "ordinance of God," and those who are vested with authority to rule, are "ordained of God." This is the principal means by which he keeps order and subordination, and promotes peace and prosperity among his rebellious subjects on earth. This is one way in which he restrains the rage of iniquity, and preserves the human race from total extirpation.

PART I. Righteousness exalteth a nation.

The word *righteousness* has different acceptations in the holy scriptures.

Sometimes it denotes the absolute perfection, or essential rectitude of God's nature. As "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness," he give laws to his intelligent creatures, demands their obedience, and renders to all the righteous rewards for the moral good or evil justly charged to their account. Hence in scripture, the word *righteousness* is put for the justice, holiness and faithfulness of God.

Sometimes it denotes the righteousness of Christ, which consists of his obedience to the precepts, and endurance of the curse of the law of God. It is denominated "the righteousness of God," because it is divine, being rendered by one divine person, and accepted by another. And it is called "the righteousness of faith," because it is received by faith.

Sometimes the word denotes the universal holiness or uprightness of man's heart and life, consisting in conformity to the nature and will of God. All true believers in Christ are righteous in the sight of God. This righteousness of the saints is threefold.

The first is the righteousness of their persons, or state, being in Christ. In justification, the divine righteousness of Christ, their representative and surety, is imputed to them by God, and received by faith. Thus they are accepted by God on

account of the merits of Jesus Christ, and so "made the righteousness of God in him."

The second is in the inherent righteousness or holiness of their natures, being renovated by the word and spirit of God. The religious principles they embrace are righteous, being derived from the "word of truth," and conformed to the law of God.

The third is the righteousness of their lives, produced by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. This righteousness consists in a conscientious and constant obedience to all the commands of God, "esteeming them in all things to be right." It must proceed from a right source, or principle of divine grace in the heart: it must be rendered according to the right rule of God's law; and it must be aimed at God's glory as its ultimate end. Obedience to the will of God, we apprehend, is the meaning of the word *righteousness* in our text. The wise man uses it, no doubt, as embracing all the duties enjoined in the word of God. This righteousness is not mere morality—such as men, destitute of the divine principle of "pure and undefiled religion," may attain. Such a morality may and does exist. It is a character formed upon a well conducted selfish principle, or one that is supremely governed by a regard to reputation—a desire of honour and respect among men, or one that proceeds from a spirit of bondage—a slavish fear of punishment. It may exist where there is no filial fear of God, no saving faith in Christ, and no practical belief of the doctrines of divine revelation. If examined by "the law and the testimony"—if tried by the infallible word of God, it will be found to be a compound of pride, selfishness and self-righteousness. It may look well in the sight of men, who look only on the outward appearance, but it is abomination in the sight of the "Lord, who looketh on the heart." Persons who possess it, are like "whited sepulchres," which appear beautiful without, but within are full of all corruption.

All obligation to practice such a righteousness as our text requires, is founded upon the authority of God, as manifested in his word. Man is naturally prone to evil as the sparks fly upward. He has vicious inclinations and violent passions, which are not only at variance with his own individual happiness, but at war with the welfare of society. Unless his appetites and passions were restrained, when temptation should assail him, and his own wicked heart incline him, he would rush forward to the perpetration of every evil deed, destructive both to himself and others. The religion of divine revelation furnishes the only effectual restraints upon the evil propensities of man. Christianity furnishes the only effectual motives to a righteous life. Righteousness, therefore, can

spring only from that faith in the gospel of Christ, "which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world." The love of Christ will effectually constrain the sinner to depart from all iniquity, maintain good works, and follow that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Without faith in Christ crucified, it is impossible to please God. No good works can be performed without the grace and spirit of Christ. There are no "fruits of righteousness," but such as grow on those branches which are engrafted by the spirit of faith, in the "tree of life."

To constitute a national Righteousness,

A righteous or moral constitution is necessary. By a constitution of a nation, we mean the plan of government and system of laws adopted. In order to be righteous, it must correspond with the law of God. It must condemn nothing which it sanctions, and sanction nothing which it condemns. Such a constitution must lie at the very foundation of a national righteousness. It is the just homage which a nation owes to the righteous Ruler of the universe. It is necessary to secure the peace and prosperity of any people. Such a constitution as this, had ancient Israel. Its author was Jehovah himself. While it was righteously administered by their rulers, and righteously observed by the people, they were free and happy, and were exalted among the nations of the earth. A civil constitution may not be so good as many could wish; yet if it do not sanction any thing positively forbidden in the word of God, it does not release the people from subjection. We do not assert, that christianity is necessary to the existence of civil government. Greece and Rome, while ignorant of this, were famed for their civil institutions. Yet some kind of religion, whether true or false, has been found by every wise and practical politician, both in ancient modern times, to be necessary to the administration of civil government. A belief that man is accountable to some superior being, and that there is a future state of rewards for the righteous, and punishments for the wicked, has more influence in governing mankind, than all the penal sanctions ever annexed to any code of human laws. Of this, the wise lawgivers of ancient Athens and Sparta, were convinced. And it is owing to this, that the benign influence of the laws which they made, was felt for hundreds of years. If the false systems of religion which prevailed in Greece and Rome, and the other nations of the earth, gave such efficacy to human laws, how much more powerful and beneficial must be the influence exerted by the "pure and undefiled religion" of divine revelation?

In modern times it has been ascertained that any kind of re-

ligion is better for a nation than atheism. In France, "every circumstance was as favourable to the success of the experiment as it could be. Learning was in its highest state of advancement; philosophy boasted of an approximation to perfection; and refinement and politeness had never been more complete in any people." But the result was horrible beyond description. When christianity was proscribed and atheism reigned, a deluge of every species of iniquity overwhelmed the nation. Standing on the quicksands of scepticism, it sank to the lowest degree of disgrace and wretchedness. This dreadful experiment has plainly proved to the world, that no government can long exist without the restraints of some kind of religion, presenting terrors to evil doers.

The *righteous administration* of a good constitution, is an essential branch of a national righteousness. The best constitution, when unrighteously administered, will be productive of evil. Instances of this are recorded in sacred and profane history. Ancient Israel had a most excellent constitution, made by God himself, and yet it was often most unrighteously administered by the rulers. Then the people were not protected in their civil rights. They were involved in unjust wars, heavily burdened with taxes, and grievously oppressed with national calamities. The prophet Jeremiah tells us, that a good constitution is righteously administered, when judgment and righteousness are executed, the spoiled are delivered out of the hand of the oppressor, no wrong nor violence is done to the stranger, the widow and the fatherless, and no innocent blood is shed. Jer. xxiii. 3.

But the most essential part of a national righteousness, consists in *righteous rulers to administer a good government, and righteous citizens to yield obedience to it*. If the people of any nation be not righteous, the best constitution and system of laws cannot restrain them from rushing into ruin. It is now generally admitted, that religion is the only permanent basis of civil government. This is strictly true of such a government as that of the United States, which is a Representative Democracy. All the power resides ultimately in the people, but can be exercised by them only through means of the representatives chosen by them for this purpose. It follows of course, that such as the people are, such will be the rulers. If the people be virtuous and religious, the government will be faithfully administered by upright men, chosen for the purpose. But, on the contrary, if the people be vicious, vile men will be exalted to office. Magistrates ought to be "able men, and men of truth, fearing God and hating covetousness." They are the representatives, or vicegerents of God upon earth. They ought to be men in whom the utmost confidence

and most fearless reliance can be placed by the people. They ought, both in public and private, to hate iniquity and practice righteousness with all their might. The continual bent of their hearts ought to be towards the discharge of their duty, both to God and man. They are to be considered not only as rulers for God, but also benefactors from God. It is their duty to do all that lies in their power for the suppression of iniquity, and for the promotion of universal righteousness and happiness. It is for the accomplishment of these very ends, that they are "ordained of God," and that power is put into their hands by the people. The apostle Paul tells us, that rulers are the ministers of God for good to mankind; that they are not to be a terror to good works, but to the evil; and that they bear not the sword in vain; for they are revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil. Rom. xiii. 1—5. It is their province to protect the people in the peaceful enjoyment of their civil and religious liberties and privileges.

But civil government, in its best estate, administered by the best men, is intrinsically weak. If the mass of the people were destitute of religious principle, it would be but a feeble barrier to check the torrent of iniquity. How easy is it to evade human laws? How difficult is it, in many cases, to detect crime? Besides, there are many vices prejudicial to the general good, that human laws cannot reach. In addition to all this, there is a natural impetuosity in human passions, which no human power can restrain. Hence, we see the necessity that righteousness should pervade the nation: Every member of the civil community ought to love and practice sobriety, righteousness and godliness. Each one ought to manifest love to God, by serving him with all his might; and love to all men, by doing them good as opportunity offers. All, in their several stations and relations, ought to watch over their hearts and lives. Governing their unruly passions, they ought to prove the purity of their principles by a righteous practice. The holy fire of heaven-born piety, ought to burn in every heart, and in every habitation in the land. In every family, the morning and evening sacrifice ought to be daily offered up to God. The rising generation ought to be most carefully trained up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." How can men, who fear not God, regard human authority and laws? How can those who disregard parental authority and instructions, become good citizens? But let all, whether rulers or ruled, comply with the requisitions of the divine law, then men would live soberly, righteously, godly—private interest would yield to public good—party spirit would subside—wars would cease—domestic feuds would be silenced—crime of every description would come to an end—man would

be the true friend of man—and benevolence and uprightness would characterize the intercourse of society. Such would be the blessed effects of the universal reign of righteousness. In so far as it prevails in any nation, will its happy influence be felt. When every one, from the highest to the lowest in the nation, “feareth God and worketh righteousness;” then shall “judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.” When all, in public and private life, shall keep the commandments of God, then shall “our peace be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea.” Is. xlviii. 17, 18. Then “our officers shall be peace, and our exactors righteousness;” the righteous shall flourish as the willows by the water courses, and abundance of peace and prosperity be enjoyed.

Such a righteousness as we have described,

Exalts the character of a nation.—The rigid and constant practice of righteousness, will impart to a nation a moral grandeur of character which will command the respect of the rest of the world. Corrupt as human nature is, it cannot but esteem and reverence a righteous nation. Such a nation may, for a time, lie under wicked imputations, but these shall soon pass away, and its glory will shine forth among the kingdoms of the world. Hence, Moses, the meek man of God, says to the nation of Israel; “Keep, therefore, (the statutes and judgments of the Lord your God,) and do them: for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. “For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day.” Deut. iv. 6—8. Israel, by the practice of righteousness, under the renowned reign of king Solomon, the inspired penman of our text, became famous in the world. The mighty of the earth sought unto him, and brought presents. The equitable reign of Jehosaphat, shows how much righteousness elevates the character of a nation. Even the Philistines and Arabs, the enemies of Israel, testified their respect by bringing him very valuable presents. The same thing is evidently proved, by the reign of the good king Hezekiah, which made the kingdom of Israel to flourish, “so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.” The righteousness which heathens can practice, made the Romans so honourable, that other nations submitted to them their disputes, and courted allegiance with them.

Righteousness, also, *promotes the prosperity, and establishes the security* of a nation. It may be, that a sinful nation has flourished for a time, but the "triumphing of the wicked is short." Vice and impiety may produce a sudden flash of splendour, and a temporary exaltation, but sooner or later they will promote decay, and bring inevitable destruction. It will be found, in the long course of events, that nothing morally wrong can be politically right. Nothing that is unrighteous can be finally successful. Nothing contrary to "pure and undefiled" religion, can be eventually favourable to civil policy. If sinful nations have apparently prospered, it is because some good has been mixed with the evil; or it is because God intends to use this temporary success to accomplish a general scheme, or promote a particular purpose of humbling and correcting other guilty nations; or it is because the cup of their iniquity is not full, and their punishment is delayed, that their ruin may be more signal and tremendous, and their downfall may be a more portentous event for the instruction of mankind. It is true, that religion will often oppose apparent means of individual and national aggrandizement, and condemn that to which human pride would aspire. Even when the object in itself is truly desirable, it forbids its attainment, except by lawful means. But in these instances, it sacrifices an empty show for solid glory; and the vanishing triumphs of a day, for the permanent prosperity of many successive generations. Nothing but righteousness will be productive of real good, and lasting prosperity to any people. It increases the wealth and prosperity of a nation, and multiplies individual and social enjoyments. It prevents all measures destructive to life and happiness, increases the resources of support, and establishes the security of a nation. Industry, economy, content, submission, and obedience, form so large a practical part of religion, wherever it is faithfully taught, it will seldom fail to promote in the people the ends both of true policy and genuine morality. The political value of religion cannot be too firmly believed, or too carefully kept in view in the government of mankind.

That righteousness is the glory, prosperity and bulwark of a nation will appear, if we consider, that there is a *connection* between individual and national righteousness and individual and national character and prosperity. This connection is as natural as that between seedtime and harvest. The solidity of the parts must contribute to the firmness of the whole. God has so ordered it, that virtue shall be its own reward, and vice its own punishment. "Can it be that providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue?" Wherever real religion pervades the hearts, and regulates the

life of men, there industry and contentment, peace and plenty, order and subordination will prevail. When the members of a nation are faithful in the discharge of all the duties of their several stations and relations, national fame and prosperity will be the natural and necessary consequence. Certainly a good constitution, faithfully administered, and cheerfully complied with on the part of the people, will secure the honour and welfare of any nation. Hence king David at his death, solemnly charged Solomon his son and successor to practice righteousness, that he might be blessed, and that his kingdom might prosper. And Moses the servant of God, said to Israel at his death: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments, which I command you this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high, above all the nations of the earth; and that all these blessings shall come upon thee," &c. Deut. xxviii. 1—14.

Righteousness will also draw down the divine blessing on a nation. This, certainly, will secure great honour and lasting prosperity to any people. The blessing which God so richly promised by his servant Moses to Israel, made them a great nation and happy people, when they were obedient to the divine commands. The spirit of God came on Azariah, and he said, "Hear ye me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you while ye be with him: and if ye seek him he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him he will forsake you." 2 Chron. xv. 7, 2.

The history of all nations, ancient or modern, proves that righteousness is the only source of national honour and prosperity. If we read the inspired history of Israel we will be convinced of the truth of this assertion. If we read the histories of the Persian, Grecian and Roman empires, we will see that even the righteousness which heathen nations can practice, was productive of many precious advantages.*

* Both the friends and foes of religion unite in bearing testimony to the political advantages of religion. The able but infidel statesman Machiavel says, "Those princes and commonwealths, who would keep their governments entire and uncorrupt, are above all things, to have a care of religion and its ceremonies, and preserve them in due veneration, for in the whole world there is not a greater sign of imminent ruin, than when God and his worship are despised."

The illustrious Washington says, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in the courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of

PART II. *Sin is a reproach to any people.*

The latter part of our text presents us with the dark side of the picture. If the natural consequence of righteousness be national honour and prosperity, on the contrary, sin must inevitably bring reproach and ruin on any people.

The original word, here rendered *reproach*, generally signifies *goodness or mercy*, and is so translated in most instances where it occurs in scripture. Accordingly some translate the latter part of the text, "*the goodness or mercy of nations is sin*;" the meaning of which is, that the religion of the Gentiles, or nations surrounding Israel, was idolatry. All their apparent goodness or mercy was sinful in the sight of God. But the word, like others in the Hebrew and some other languages is susceptible both of a good and bad signification. It denotes something uncommonly good or evil—a great degree of piety or impiety. In Lev. xx. 17, it most certainly means a most flagrant act of wickedness, (rendered *a wicked thing*;) and, as the wise man (in Prov. xxv. 10,) uses a verb from the same root in a meaning clearly similar; we may conclude that the word is here properly translated.

An unrighteous constitution is a sin and reproach to any people, especially to them who enjoy the light of divine revelation. Such a constitution is set up in opposition to the divine government. Every constitution ought to correspond with the divine law, enjoining those duties which are for the honor and happiness of the people, and forbidding those sins which are injurious to the well-being of civil society. As far as it is consistent with the rights of conscience, it ought to favour the cause of revealed religion. Things sinful in a constitution must have a pernicious influence on society, and defeat the end designed by civil government. In our free and happy country, religion and civil government are not joined together by human authority. It is difficult to determine exactly how far legislative authority ought to be exercised in favour of christianity. But as no government can be administered without the aid of some kind of religion, there ought at least to be

a refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles. It is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?"

The pious and profound bishop Butler, the infidel statesman and philosopher Franklin, and other authors, might be cited upon this point. The learned Bossuet observes, "that while the New Testament manifests to us the operation of God's grace, the Old Testament exhibits to us his providential government of the world." The Jewish law has been held very important by some of the wisest legislators. The study of the holy scriptures, especially the Old Testament, must be very useful to the modern statesman.

public profession of a belief in one Supreme Being, to whom all men are amenable, and in a future state of retribution.

An unrighteous administration of government is a sin and shame to any people. By the law of God, any thing sinful in the constitution and laws of a country ought not to be administered by the rulers; for in this case, it is their duty to obey God rather than men. But the best of governments may be most sinfully and shamefully administered. This is done, when things enjoined are neglected, and things forbidden are encouraged,—when justice is delayed, and not impartially administered,—when magistrates betray the trust reposed, not faithfully discharging the duties of their office,—when governors and legislators are influenced by prejudice, party spirit and private interest, to neglect the good of the country committed to their care,—when they act dishonestly and dishonourably towards other nations, breaking the sacred bonds of peace and amity, and violating the most solemn treaties with them,—when, in short, they pursue measures calculated to destroy public confidence, distress the people and involve them in wars unjust and impolitic. Certainly these things are a reproach to any people.

Again, it is a sin and disgrace to any nation, when *the rulers and people live unrighteous lives*. Sin in itself is and ought to be a reproach. It will finally expose the sinner to everlasting shame and contempt. Yet so great is the corruption of human nature, that many delight to glory in that which is their shame. Our national sins, alas! are many and great. May it not be said of many of our magistrates, higher and lower, that they “do evil earnestly with both hands?” Mic. vii. 3. Is not iniquity destructive to the nation’s honour and welfare, too often encouraged and sometimes licensed by public authority? Is there not much corruption, knavery and bribery practised on the part of them who hold or desire to hold public offices? Are there not many good and wholesome laws very partially administered? Are not those, who fear not God and regard not man, raised to office, and so made the ministers of God and the representatives and vicegerents of the Most High, who is the governor of the nations of the earth? And do they not, by the influence of their evil example, contaminate society ’till chicanery and pocrisy mark their conduct and the behaviour of others? ‘The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.’ Ps. xii. 8. Do not many ‘despise government, and speak evil of dignities,’ by reviling and cursing the rulers of the people? Do not treachery, injustice, intemperance, and unchastity prevail to a great extent? Does not the single sin of intoxication send many thousands of our citizens every year to their graves, and make our republic a proverb and reproach

among the nations of the earth? Is not the holy name of God continually every day blasphemed among us? Are not deceit, fraud, lying and perjury, sins common in almost every part of our country? Does not the blood-thirsty duelist, actuated by pride and a principle of false honour, still murder his fellow beings and fellow citizens, and yet go unpunished? Is not the moral obligation of the Christian sabbath almost universally disregarded in this country? Are not the word and worship of God generally neglected and despised, in public and private, by the mass of the people? When was there a time, in which errors in religion, destructive of the well-being of civil society and the welfare of the immortal souls of men, were more zealously and widely diffused in this country? Are not lotteries for filthy lucre encouraged, and sometimes sanctioned by public authority? Is not this a destructive species of gambling, which discourages honest industry, ensnares the rich and the poor, and ruins both the gainer and the loser? We publicly profess our belief, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness;" and yet is there not more than a tenth part of our population groaning under the iron rod of slavery? We glory in our civil and religious liberties, and yet are not the most of our citizens sunk in moral degradation, the miserable slaves of sin, and the vile vassals of Satan, entirely unacquainted with the glorious liberty of the sons of God—that spiritual liberty with which Christ makes his followers free indeed? Do not spiritual ignorance and blindness, and professed and practical infidelity greatly abound in our country? Much is done for the cause of Christ in our day, but does not impiety outstrip the progress of "pure and undefiled religion?" Is it not morally certain, that vice and crime of every description increase as fast, if not faster, in proportion, than the population of our country? Is not ingratitude for the signal blessings which the bountiful Giver of all good has bestowed on us, one of the reigning sins of our nation? Yea, are not both the mercies and judgments of God overlooked and misimproved?

But sin is not only the reproach, but the *ruin* of any people.

Some deny that God bestows any rewards, and inflicts any punishments on nations but such as are the natural consequence of their conduct, without any particular direction of providence, with respect to their good or bad characters. They allege, that the history of the mercies and judgments which God dispensed to Israel as a nation, under the Mosaic economy, affords no example to other nations. We grant, that God has so ordered it, that virtue shall be generally followed by honour and prosperity, and vice with reproach and ruin. But

besides this, we allege that God punishes nations with judgments which are not the natural consequence of their sins, and bestows blessings upon them, which are not the natural result of their righteousness. The deluge was not the natural consequence of the sins of the antediluvians. The fire and brimstone which destroyed the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, were not the natural result of their wickedness.—These were particular interpositions of Divine Providence, as signal punishments of great iniquity. The good land of Canaan, as a gracious gift from God to the children of Israel, was not the natural consequence of their obedience. God gave it to them as a particular expression of his infinite goodness, by a special act of his almighty power. Our text is verified in the memorable mercies which he afterwards bestowed on that nation for their obedience, and the remarkable judgments which he brought on them for their disobedience, according to ancient prediction. Deut. xxviii. 1—68. The predictions of the prophets concerning other nations, might be quoted in proof of the same point. The wise man says, "When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." Prov. xxix. 2.

National sins are punished in this world by national calamities. They provoke the Almighty to withdraw and give up a nation to ruin. Great is the regard of a holy God for righteousness. Virtue, such as heathens could practice, made Greece and Rome to flourish. After the latter had been raised to the very pinnacle of human greatness, it was brought down to the lowest degree of disgrace and wretchedness, when those sins which are condemned by the light of nature, and reproved by the dictates of a natural conscience, generally prevailed. The righteous Judge of all often brought heavy judgments on the people of Israel, for their wickedness in disobeying his commands. "Now, for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity." 2 Chron. xv. 5—7. "The Lord appeared unto Solomon—and said unto him—if ye shall at all turn from following me, you, or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them: and this house

which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people. And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done this unto this land and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them; therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil." 1 Kings, ix. 1—10. At last, after the cup of their iniquity was filled up by the crucifixion of Christ, and the utter rejection of him and his blessed gospel, the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost, in the unparalleled judgments inflicted on them at the destruction of Jerusalem.—Moreover, the Most High has threatened to make all wicked nations to drink out of the cup that is in his hand, the red wine of his wrath. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve the Lord shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Is. lx. 12. Jer. xii. 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God." Ps. ix. 17.

For the sins already mentioned have we not reason to fear divine displeasure? Have we not been prospered more than any nation on earth? Have we rendered thanks to Almighty God according to the magnitude and multitude of the national blessings bestowed? Is our goodness already so great, or our righteousness increasing so rapidly, that we have no reason to dread the holy vengeance of heaven? Is it possible that our national sins can escape the righteous judgments of God? "He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct us?"—May not he justly say to us—"Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies." Is. i. 4, 24. "You only have I known of all the nations of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Amos iii. 2.

From this subject we make the following remarks.

1. He is the true friend of his country who "feareth God and worketh righteousness." True patriotism is not an empty claim to philanthropy and public spirit. It is a real regard to the well-being of society. It arises from a combination of disinterestedness, integrity and content. Its essential principles consist in a rational love of liberty, order, law, peace and justice, which form the safeguards of the nation and promote the happiness of the people. The religion of divine revelation imposes its sacred obligations on all the members of the civil community. It enjoins on all, the performance of the duties

of their several stations and relations. It is diametrically opposed to sin, which is destructive to the best interests of man both temporal and eternal. It is a religion of light and love, of holiness and happiness. It can effectually bind man to man, and promote the common good. It is the only firm foundation of civil government, and the only permanent basis of the liberties of mankind. It cannot be prejudicial to the prosperity and happiness of any people. Can that man be a friend to his country who is an enemy to all righteousness?

2. The duty of civil rulers is to favour the cause of righteousness. They ought to consider themselves as bound by the most sacred obligations to promote the public good by promoting virtue and religion, and the general diffusion of knowledge among the people. In the first place, their own example should be a living law, which would be regarded by many who regard not written laws. They ought to live and act under a deep and abiding sense of their responsibility to the sovereign Lord and righteous Judge of all. They ought to lend all their influence and use all their endeavours to stem the torrent of iniquity, by seasonably enacting and faithfully enforcing good laws. They ought to adopt such a general train of measures as will produce the most numerous and powerful motives to practice righteousness, and will take away all temptations to sin, which is the very bane of society. They ought to protect, encourage and employ them who do well, and discountenance and punish them who do evil.

3. The great duty of the people, in respect both to public and private good, is to practice righteousness. The honour, prosperity and safety of the nation depend on their upright conduct. Obedience to the divine law is calculated to make them wise and happy. It is their duty to consider civil government as the ordinance of God, instituted for their good.—They ought, therefore, “to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, and to be ready for every good work.” Tit. iii. 1. They that resist the existing authorities resist the ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves damnation. Rom. xiii. 1. They are commanded to pray for all that are in authority, and to lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

If, therefore, we regard the authority of God—if we have any respect to his glory—if we love our country—if we seek our own best interests, let us with all our might, in our several stations and relations, hate and forsake sin, and love and practice righteousness. Let us, by prayer, “seek the Lord till he come and reign righteousness upon us.”

The customary addresses to the Constituted Authorities of this State will close the discourse.

His Excellency the Governor.

By the suffrages of the people of this State, you are called to be their Chief Magistrate. Promotion comes from no quarter, but from God. "He putteth down one and setteth up another." "The Spirit of the Lord God of Israel saith, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Your high office imposes on you an awful responsibility. To promote the glory of God by promoting the good of the people of this State, is the grand duty of your office. To attain this very desirable end, a deep and lasting sense of your own insufficiency and a firm and entire reliance on divine aid, are indispensably necessary. The grand design of civil government is to be obtained by the suppression of vice and impiety, the general diffusion of knowledge, and the universal reign of righteousness. In governing the people of this State, you will give praise and protection to them who do well; and you will not bear the sword in vain, but revenge the injuries done to the body politic by executing wrath on them who do evil.— Thus you will not be a terror to good works, but to the evil; and so prove to be the minister of God for good to the people. God only can prosper or frustrate your endeavours. "The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," therefore, "trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he shall direct thy paths." The practice of personal righteousness will make you honourable and useful while you live, and will embalm you memory at death. The prayers of the righteous will be offered to the throne of grace in your behalf. May your administration "be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; and as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain." As a faithful minister of God, may you at last receive the approbation of the righteous Judge of all.

The honourable Council, and House of Representatives.

You are chosen by a free people to fill high and responsible stations. The dearest interests of the State are committed into your hands. The influence of your official acts, whether beneficial or injurious, will long be felt by the people of this State. The duties to which you are called are numerous and arduous. First of all, like the inspired penman of our text, ask that wisdom from God which will be profitable to direct you in all matters. Consult the sacred pages of divine revelation, and there you will find "instruction in righteousness" and the most valuable lessons of political wisdom. In the discharge of your duty, every thing connected with the well-being of this Commonwealth will claim your most careful attention.

If righteousness be the only solid and permanent foundation of the public good, the public morals cannot be too carefully guarded by salutary laws. If vice be permitted to prevail, it will defeat the grand design of civil government, and disjoint the whole frame of the body politic. Remember your responsibility to "the Governor of the nations." Legislate in obedience to the high behests of heaven. Walk worthy of the kingdom of Christ, which is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." May you be an honour and a blessing to your country—and at last may it be said to you, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Amen.

Religious and Miscellaneous Intelligence.

THE CHEROKEE INDIANS.

THE following appeal, (says the Philadelphian,) is from the pen of Mr. Gold, brother-in-law of Mr. Elias Boudinot, Editor of the Cherokee Phoenix. He is still in this city, promoting the interests of that paper, which has become exceedingly important as a medium for the circulation of the scriptures. The gospel of Matthew is now in a course of publication in the *syllabic characters*, invented by Guyst; which will put into their possession the words of eternal life, at a period much earlier than that in which they can be furnished in any other manner by their infant press. The aid of the benevolent without their bounds, is much needed, not only to sustain this unprecedented enterprise, but that their printing establishment may be enlarged to meet the growing wants of the people. The members of the Church at Carmel, are anxious to have some portion at least, of the scriptures, and also some Cherokee Tracts for immediate distribution.

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE INDIAN CAUSE.

The Cherokee Nation are the first fruits of American missions. They were given to the labours of a Gambold, a Blackburn, a Kingsbury, and a Hoyt, with a Worcester. But scarce had this star appeared in the west, when it was covered with a pall, by the proposition to *pluck up* the nation. Dr. Worcester hastened to the seat of government, to prevent, if possible, the adoption of such a measure, and eventually succeeded to the great joy of the Cherokee people, and their faithful missionaries. There, in preference to any other place, did this friend to the Indians rejoice to die. The people regarded him as their distinguished father, and they "gave him possession of a burying place" with their fathers' sepulchres. A *goodly* company have since followed him from this nation, and with him we trust, are now rejoicing, not that they are capable of civilization, but of being "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty."

Have our tongues used the proverb, "an Indian will still be an Indian?" or the "unadvised" language, that the *Indian* is "more brutish than any man," and that his *blood* resists all means of

civilization—notwithstanding the finest specimens of human nature, in the rude state, are confessedly found among this people? For what nation ever exhibited finer specimens of devotion, oratory, and patriotism? The Greeks from a barbarous people, became civilized by the introduction of an alphabet, which was not of their own invention. What then may not be expected of those, who have invented, without prompter or patron, an alphabet of unparalleled excellence? The circumstances are simply these:—

Guyst, an untutored native, who had not known the sound of a letter, began to say to one and to another, that it was not a good thing for the red men not to have a way to fold up their thoughts and send them to each other, like the whites. But they all laughed at his singularity. He left off hunting, and betook himself to the study of letters. His wife reproached him for his indolence and folly, and tried to drive him again to hunting. But he was busily arranging all the syllables of the Indian tongue after a perfect manner; of which, after dissecting every word in the language, it seems there were eighty-five, and giving his heedful attention to cut out proper characters to represent them. The impatience of his wife, at last led her to destroy his letters or types. He then left his home, went to the Arkansas, and remained there till his plan was perfected, which the philosopher might perhaps be apt to call a *lusus naturæ*. His new words ran away from him like young partridges of the mountains, and many, by these winged messengers, immediately began to whisper to each other, at the distance of a thousand miles. In short their new alphabet is judged to be much superior to any other in the world. It is not with them as with others, that reading must be learned by *going to school*;—it is a mere *pioneer* to the schools, a part of their mother tongue which is learned in a day by some, and which the old and young are able to learn, both to read and write, in a few days. Having adopted the pursuit of learning as their *second nature*, engrafted upon the wildness of what is supposed to lurk in their *first*, they honoured the author with a golden medal; and their friends in Boston concurred with them in giving to his invention the aids of the Press.

RELIGIOUS STATE OF GREECE.

THE Rev. John Hartly, missionary of the Church Missionary Society, under date of Nov. 2, 1827, writes as follows:

On arriving at Syra [an island in the Grecian Archipelago] I had the pleasure of meeting my valued friend, the Rev. Josiah Brewer, one of the American missionaries, and in his company made the remainder of the tour. We visited the islands of Myconi, Tino, Delos, Syra, (a second time,) and Hydra; and afterward landed at Napoli di Romania, and thence proceeded by land to Argos and Corinth. We then crossed the Isthmus to Cenchrea, and, at length, arrived at Egina.

I am happy to inform you, that our travels have not been without benefit, and that they hold out the prospect of still greater. We have established depots for the sale of the Scriptures in al-

most every place of importance which we have visited; and are glad to find that there is an encouraging demand for them.

Such a revolution of mind has been keeping pace in Greece with political changes, that in the event it may produce consequences of incalculable importance. I do not believe myself exaggerating when I say, that by far the greater proportion of thinking men are no longer believers in the dogmas and inventions of men; every where I hear them speaking of a Reformation of Religion; and such a thirst for information is afloat, and such a free spirit of examination, that we cannot but hope for the most beneficial results. It cannot, however, be denied, that there is a strong tendency to Infidelity: yet from the readiness with which I find persons lending an ear to the evidences of Christianity, and retracting error when made acquainted with their force, I conceive that scepticism is rather, in Greece, the result of want of information, than of opposition to truth.

IRELAND.

BRITISH REFORMATION SOCIETY.

Extracts from English Publications for May.

THE British Society for promoting the Religious Principles of the Reformation, have stated in No. 2, of their Quarterly Extracts, that they have authorized the employment of thirteen Scripture Readers, at a salary of £20 each; and have distributed, in various ways, upwards of 100,000 Tracts, besides Bibles, Testaments, addresses to their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, and other smaller publications.

The authenticated statement of the number of converts up to September 30, 1827;—total, 2357. This number consists solely of adults, who have publicly abjured the errors of Popery. The children of conformists are not included.

Roman Catholic Bishops.

THIS body, or at least a considerable number of them, have recently held a meeting in Dublin, for the purpose of establishing a periodical Magazine, to advocate the doctrines of the Church of Rome. How delightful it is to see such a system as Popery dragged to the light by its own short-sighted advocates. We shall keep our eye upon this promised Magazine.

Instances of deplorable Bigotry.

A ROYAL ordinance has lately been issued in Saxony, which forbids (under heavy penalty) any Saxon, under twenty-one years of age, from changing his religion; and any one secretly professing a new faith, is to pay a large fine, and to be deprived of all his civil rights.

THE Bishop of Basle, in a letter to his clergy, expressed his profound grief, that "the versions of the *New Testament*," which are forbidden by the Holy See, and "the *Heures Edifiantes*," are circulated; as they metamorphose the good Catholics into "a jumble of Biblical Christians, with nothing but their conscience, and the Holy Scriptures, so called, for their guide." The clergy are exhorted to destroy these pernicious books, and to permit the faithful to read no work which is not allowed by the Pope.

Protestantism advancing in Bohemia.

By a letter from Bohemia, it appears that the circulation of the Scriptures in that country is prohibited, and that in consequence many families are leaving the Romish church and embracing the Reformed doctrines, as they cannot reconcile it to their consciences to continue in a Church that denies the fullest liberty of perusing the Divine Record.

LONDON ANNIVERSARIES.

WE copy from the New-York Spectator the following abstract of the proceedings of some of the numerous religious Societies, at their anniversaries held in May last.

British and Foreign Bible Society.

The Rev. Mr. Brandon, the Secretary, read the report, by which it appeared, that 5000 copies of the Polish Testament are now printing in Berlin; that the Turkish Bible had been completed—40,000 copies of the New Testament had been printed at Sulzbach. The Finish Testament was in good progress. 2000 copies of the ancient and modern Testament had been sent to Greece: it had also been translated into the Albanian language. The total number of Bibles distributed the past year by the Society were 137,172, and of Testaments, 199,208, being a circulation of Bibles and Testaments amounting to 42,264 over the distribution of the former year.

The receipts for the year amounted to eighty-one thousand pounds, or 360,000 dollars. After the report was read the meeting was addressed by Lord Barrowby, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Litchfield, Lord Calthorpe, W. Wilberforce, Esq., the Bishop of Sodor and Man, the Rev. Dr. Patterson, the Rev. Daniel Wilson, the Rev. Mr. Bain, John Thornton, Esq., the Rev. Mr. Brandrum, the Rev. Mr. Alder, of Montreal, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, and the Rev. Mr. Allen, Rector of St. Paul's Church Philadelphia.

Sunday School Union.

THIS Society celebrated its anniversary on the 13th May, and from its excellent report we have made the following extract: "The total number of schools under this Union, is, 9223, teachers 92,866, and 916,989 scholars to England and Ireland. The receipts during the year was 6043*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.* At Hamburg and Bremen, prosperous schools have been formed. At Corfu, the Greek school contains 40 scholars, who are taught by a priest. The schools in India are making rapid strides, and 2216 girls are taught in the female schools of Bengal. In Ceylon 7734 scholars are instructed, and in New South Wales, Van Dieman's Land, and Polynesia, the Sabbath School cause is progressing. Among the gentlemen who spoke at this meeting was the Rev. Mr. Allen, of Philadelphia, who gave an interesting account of the progress of Sunday Schools in the United States. The Rev. gentleman's speech was received, with unbounded applause.

Wesleyan Missionary Society.

THE receipts of this Society the past year was \$192,515 42.—The report of the progress of the missionary cause is highly gratifying.

Port of London and Bethel Union Society.

THE anniversary meeting of this Society was held on the 21st of May. Lord Gambier being prevented attending in consequence of indisposition, Captain Campbell, R. N. was appointed chairman. After a suitable address from the Gallant Captain, the report was read by the Rev. T. Vautin. In the floating chapel, it was stated, had been two and sometimes three services on every Lord's day, and one on Thursday evenings—the number of communicant tickets issued monthly was 135. The attendance during the past year amounted to 17,585, of which number 9014 were sailors. In the Society's school at Wapping, 180 boys and 90 girls were on the books, and the average daily attendance was 137 boys and 70 girls, who all received the benefit of Christian instruction. The society has a library on board the floating chapel, and they have issued, during the year, 1715 volumes, 212 pamphlets, besides many thousand Tracts. The "Loan Libraries," contain about two dozen books each, and 68 of these boxes have been lent to sea going ships, many of which have been returned with expressions of the liveliest gratitude.

The Bethel Flag has become the rallying signal to sailors, all over the world, for religious worship, and this flag is now seen at China, Bengal, Bombay, Memel, the West Indies, America, the Pacific and Indian Islands.

Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews.

It appears from the report of this Society, that the receipts the past year amounted to 12,727*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.* "The schools consist of 41 boys, and 47 girls. In the seminary are seven students, preparing to go out as missionaries. Three converted Jews have entered the missionary field the past year."

THE Western University of Pennsylvania, has conferred on the Rev. Alexander Bullions of Cambridge, N. Y. the honorary degree of D. D.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Our correspondents are getting rather remiss. We have received no original matter for some time past. We hope this hint will call out a supply for that department of our work.

MASONRY AND ANTI-MASONRY.

WE have now in this state, and, judging from present appearances, soon shall have, throughout the United States, two formidable parties, arrayed against each other, with all that violence, which usually distinguishes times of high party excitement; to which will be superadded the most bitter hatred, and jealous distrust. Masonry on the one hand, claiming divine origin, an existence co-eval with the creation of the world, and all that is excellent, in religion and morals, arts and sciences, government and civilization—claims, though absurd in the extreme, and in some respects blasphemous, yet, with few exceptions, tacitly admitted by the common consent of mankind, until by one of the most daring acts of violence to be found on record, she trampled un-

der her feet, not only every moral obligation, but set at defiance the constitution and laws of our country in the abduction and murder of William Morgan. Although this act of violence was perpetrated nearly two years ago, and that too, in the midst of a dense population, such is the astonishing power of the institution, that the offenders cannot be brought to justice, though the kidnappers are well known. And masons continue to abuse an insulted community, by slandering the characters and injuring the persons and property of such as dare say aught against their goddess, and by circulating the most fiend-like falsehoods respecting the fate of the unfortunate victim of their vengeance.

But arrayed against the high pretensions of this horn of the beast, is a numerous body of intelligent and active men, ardently devoted to the civil institutions of our country. And they have become fully impressed with the belief, that masonry and civil liberty cannot both flourish on the same soil. Amongst this band of men, are many professing the religion of Jesus Christ, who consider masonry not only as opposed to the rights of man, but diametrically opposite to the principles of Christianity. And so well founded is this opinion, that it is indeed matter of surprise, that *any*, who bear the Christian name, should be found in the ranks of masonry: and were it not for the religious errors and defections of the times, masonry would be unable to number on her rolls even a single professor of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Believing that anti-masons are engaged in the cause of truth and humanity, we shall from time to time, give a brief view of their operations. They are rapidly increasing in numbers. A weekly paper, devoted exclusively to their interest, has been recently commenced, with flattering prospects of success, in Boston, Mass. Another is contemplated at Hartford, Conn. Several are published in New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, one of which, (the Indiana county American, published by James Morehead, Esq.) holds strong and unequivocal language, reprobating the whole system of masonry. Efforts are making in Vermont and Ohio for the accomplishment of the same object. And we have in this state about twenty papers engaged in incessant warfare with the institution. The anti-masons are organizing themselves, and extending their communications with one another, that they may act with the greater efficiency. Still we do not expect to see this giant of iniquity fully destroyed till the ushering in of the millennial day; but that his power will be greatly curbed, cannot be doubted.

On the 4th inst. the convention of seceding masons met at Le Roy, "read and adopted the new Declaration of Independence." What the nature of this instrument is, we are unable to say, not having yet seen it. Between the hours of 10 and 11 the people, who had assembled to join in the celebration of the day, formed a procession and repaired to the Presbyterian church, where the services were commenced with prayer; and after the declaration of Independence had been read, Mr. H. A. Read delivered an oration on the subject which had called them together. At 4 P. M. they again assembled in the church, and Solomon Southwick, Esq. of this city, delivered his oration to seceding masons, ac-

cording to appointment, which, it appears from the western papers, was received with the most enthusiastic applause.

"The performance," says the Ontario Phoenix, "closed about sun down, and during the day, among this large assemblage of people, from various places, no accident happened—nor were the streets lumbered with blackguards and drunkards. The number of persons were variously estimated, some calculated 12,000, some 10,000, but we to be within bounds, shall say 8,000.

"The seceding Masons convened again at the church, at 8 o'clock on the 5th. The secrets of Freemasonry were then read to the world. A respectable audience, besides the seceding masons, attended through the day, and witnessed the development of the "pestilence that walks in darkness" and lives on human blood.

"A delegation was received from Monroe county, bringing resolutions expressing the hearty thanks of a meeting in that county, to the seceding masons assembled at Le Roy. A communication of the same nature was also received from the state of Vermont.

"Before the convention adjourned, a number of resolutions were adopted, one of which is of vital importance to every anti-mason. The purport of the resolution is, that we, as anti-masons will not carry the anti-masonic principles into the presidential contest, &c. of course, then, we are happy at this time, to hail every anti-mason as a noble souled freeman, no matter whether he is for Jackson or Adams—our race is not for men, but principles."

Renunciations of masonry are daily becoming more numerous. And it is remarkable, that they all harmonize in their descriptions of masonry, though all do not seem to be influenced by the same motives. Some have been most influenced by political, others by religious, considerations. Others again, are influenced by both the above-mentioned considerations. We subjoin a few extracts from a late renunciation by Obadiah Crane, Esq. of Drake Ville, New Jersey. It will serve as a specimen of many others; and we believe will not be unacceptable to our readers, after what has already appeared in the Monitor on this subject.

"For thus withdrawing from the lodge and renouncing forever the order of masonry, I assign the following reasons.

"1. My connexion with the Church of Christ.

"I do conceive the obligations imposed by masonry to be incompatible with the religion of *Jesus*. The Bible comprises the whole duty of man. But masonry by its traditions makes void these commands; and by its corrupt mixtures, pollutes and impregnates with death these waters of life, which are designed to convey health and vigour throughout the immense empire of *Jehovah*. For 1. It embraces deism and polytheism as alike pleasing to Him who says 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,'—*who will not give his glory to another*, and who declares that idolaters shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven. Masonry claims to be of divine origin, and to have its foundations laid in evangelical truth, and yet he who falls at the feet of the grand Lama, who worships the host of heaven, or whose hands reek with the blood of human victims, offered in sacrifice to devils, or who worships a Crocodile or an Ox, may, without repentance, gain admittance to all her privileges, and be flattered as a son of light and heir of glory: See Town, Bradley, Alliman, Rezin, and other masonic publications. According to these authors a man may, upon the principles of the order, expunge the doctrine of Atonement, and with vandalic hand tear out the penalty of God's law, scoff at divine revelation, and still be hailed as a worthy brother; and, as the reward of masonic virtue, assigned a place in the Grand Lodge above, where the Great Architect of the Universe himself, is said to be the *Grand Master*.

"Blasphemous as this may appear to the uninitiated, it is nevertheless true.

"And 2. It recognizes no distinction in moral character; and no religious creed is made the test of membership, excepting only the fundamental article in the religion of nature, viz: the existence of a God. Whether a man be a Jew or a Turk, a Brahmin or a Christian, whether he be a worshipper of one or twenty gods, and whether his moral character be formed according to the precepts of the Gospel, the Zeno or the Koran, the Talmud or the Shaster, or according to no system at all, if he be but in possession of the secrets of masonry, he has a passport to my heart, and a claim upon my affections and my kindest offices, in

preference to any mortal *uninitiated*. I am bound by masonic principles, to love such individual as a brother and defend his character, to promote his honour and his interest, for no other reason than because he is a *mason*. But what is there in a knowledge of the secrets of masonry to create such a claim? Plainly, there is nothing. And yet upon no other and no better foundation is such a paramount and exclusive claim set up.

"2. *Duty to my country.* The obligations imposed by masonic oaths are incompatible with civism. Admitting the right of government, or the right of founding government, and the principles of jurisprudence, it will then follow, that whatever imposes an obstruction to their legal operations, is highly dangerous to the body politic. But whoever will read the oaths as given by Morgan, and reflect upon them, will see that, like poison infused into the human system, they are calculated, if observed, to chill and curdle the life-blood of all our civil and political relations. The oath in the 3d degree creates an obligation to the order, superior to all civil relations except in cases of murder and treason.—These heart-strings of society are not at once sundered. The unhappy victim after taking three leaps in the dark, is permitted to retire from the fangs of the monster, with life still fluttering in his bosom, yet so benumbed with the scorpion lash that he is often prepared to part with the last vital spark of his civil and political relations without a struggle or contortion of moral features. It is a well known fact, that in the upper degrees of masonry or knighthood, no relation to society is excepted. Not a core is left to vibrate to the public good when it comes in competition with the interest of the Fraternity—like decayed members they fall off from the body politic, forming a *Kingdom within a kingdom*, and thus become a combination against all the rest of mankind.

"It is the principles of the institution, and not its members against which these remarks are directed. These carried out in all their extent, would (if masonry is what it professes to be) unhinge all governments and associations of men that should cross its path.

"That it is tending to such results cannot with decency be denied. It burst like a volcano in Germany and France, and out of the smoke came forth a viper, that fastened upon Europe and was with difficulty shaken off by their united efforts. What will be its career and its termination in this country, is known only to him who sees the end from the beginning. It has long been rising and extending its grasp among the many massy columns of our republic, and may, if not timely checked, finally shake them down.

"The manacles of masonry may be shaken off. *The moral evil consists in entering into such an illegal—such an unholy compact.* But this sin may be repented of, and the institution may be withdrawn from. There is no law either human or divine that will hold a man guilty for the violation of a rash or wicked promise—even the solemn oath cannot bind the performance. If the performance involve either directly or indirectly the commission of crime, or the omission of known duty, the breach is not only lawful but virtuous.

"Had I been prompted by no higher motives than my own private interest, or the wishes or feelings of friends, I should never have appeared among the public accusers of masonry. As a Christian, I am bound to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;—and as a citizen, for the purity and perpetuity of our republican institutions."



PRESBYTERY OF GENESEE.

We learn from the Ontario Phoenix, that this Presbytery has condemned masonry, and enjoined it upon sessions under their inspection to admit none to sealing ordinances who are involved in masonic oaths, without a confession of their sin in this respect.

ODD FELLOWS.

THERE is a society in the midst of us, more numerous than is, perhaps, generally known, possessing all the distinguishing characteristics of freemasonry, bearing the name of "*Odd Fellows*." We insert below an account of them, which has recently been going the rounds of the masonic papers: and we do so with the hope that those who are engaged in reducing the power of ma-

sonry, will also give this institution a due share of their attention. For it is increasing: and if it be permitted to flourish, even though it should be on the ruins of masonry, nothing will be gained. It was conceived by masonry, and instituted as a lower order of that institution, for the accommodation of such as had not the ability or disposition to pay the initiating fee into the parent institution. Let the enemies of secret societies and unlawful oaths look to this. It is obvious that masonry is looking to this institution as a dernier resort, in case they are driven from their present ground, as the following account abundantly shows:

A RECENT application to the legislature of Maryland for an act incorporating the grand lodge of *Odd Fellows* in that state, has given rise to some speculation and inquiry as to the origin and nature of that institution. Its name has no similitude with which we are acquainted. It stands singularly *odd* amid all the appellations which have distinguished other orders and associations. We have heard of the *Ugly Club*, the *Club of Old Bachelors*, of the society of Gapers, of Loungers, &c.; but as a distinctive appellation applicable to an order of men, gravely associated together, for other than *convivial* objects, we believe the *Odd Fellows* stand alone. It is therefore natural to inquire if such a society exists, what is its nature, tendency, or design. If, as has been distinctly avowed, and of which there can be no doubt, it offers no sacrifices at the altar of Bacehus, offends no rule, moral or divine, and interferes in no government or establishment of any kind, what does it aim to accomplish? What does it profess as its object? The history of most institutions of long standing is generally obscure. Like the origin of nations, it is too frequently buried in fable or lost in antiquity. That the institution of *Odd Fellows* originated in Europe, and has been transmitted to these United States, admits we believe of very little doubt. We know that several societies of this description exist in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, and also in several parts of Ireland. Within a few years past a grand procession exceeding 3000 made its appearance in Manchester, on some public festival, and an oration was delivered explanatory of the principles of the order, and was received by the assembled multitude, who did not belong to the society, with great approbation. In France this institution is well known. Paris can boast of several societies of this description. In our own country it has been extensively patronized, for in almost every state in the union, particularly Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland and New-York, its members are numerous and respectable, and have founded many lodges. At the city of Washington, the seat of the general government, it exists we understand with great splendour. Many of the members of congress have been admitted into it, and testify much regard for the institution.

In the year 1818, a society was formed in the city of New-York, shortly after, another was established in Pleasant Valley, Dutchess county, and a third in the year 1824, in the city of Albany. Since which the number has rapidly increased in this state. A grand lodge has been formed for the whole United States, and of which Mr. Thomas Wiley is grand sire. The order consists of thirteen degrees; one of which was created by Henry, Prince of Lorraine, another was derived from Lusitania, a third from the Suevia, and a fourth from the Moers. Its existence may be traced from the historical documents for more than four hundred years, but it doubtless existed for ages before. Thus much for the *origin* of the order. We do not profess however to give more than a brief, rapid, and therefore imperfect sketch of it, knowing that it will be filled up in a more full and perfect manner hereafter.

Of the *principles* of the institution we shall barely remark, that *temperance*, *sobriety*, *friendship* and *charity* are among the most conspicuous. It deprecates all those vices which enervate the body and enfeeble the energies of the mind, it encourages piety and brotherly love, it cultivates science and learning, and in fine, it is the friend and advocate of the whole circle of those virtues which humanize the heart and enlighten the understanding. Its oddity consists in its excelling in all those qualities which grace humanity. It is therefore emphatically *the friend of man*.

These are the general objects of the institution. Its tendency and design are therefore purely moral, and cannot be justly obnoxious to censure or criticism. On this indeed, must rest its claims to future patronage and respect, and we indulge the belief that while it continues on this basis, its claim will not be rejected.

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